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**State of Vermont**  
**Vermont Department of Education**  
120 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

To: Special Education Administrators, Principals

From: Karin Edwards, Director  
PreK-8 Integrated Support for Learning

**Re: Co-teaching**

Date: August 11, 2010

Field Memo: FM #10-10

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The newly approved special education regulations describe conditions for co-teaching to be considered a special education service. Co-teaching involves two or more licensed professionals:

- sharing responsibility for the instruction of a group of students with and without IEPs. While paraprofessionals play an important role in classrooms, they do not have the professional training to be co-teachers.
- playing an active role in jointly planning and delivering instruction and assessing student learning. This means that the two educators need shared time to prepare for and evaluate co-teaching.
- responding to the diverse needs of students in a manner that would not be possible for one teacher. Co-teaching has numerous advantages such as sharing of professional expertise and lowering the teacher to student ratio.
- instructing in the same classroom space. Co-teaching does not mean that two teachers will plan together and then work with groups of students in separate spaces. While this might happen occasionally it is not a regular practice in co-teaching.

Section 2360.3.1(b)(1)(i)(A) of the rules states:

(A) Co-teaching services is the delivery of special education services in the general education setting provided jointly by the general education teacher and a special education teacher.

- 1) By selecting the co-teaching services model, the IEP team has determined that there is no compelling reason why the child's instruction cannot be provided jointly in the general education setting.
- 2) The general education teacher shall be an active participant in IEP meetings.
- 3) The general education and special education teachers will review and document each child's progress towards course objectives and IEP goals.

Should a progress review at any grading period indicate that a child is in danger of failing a course or is not making satisfactory progress towards IEP goals, the IEP team shall meet immediately to:

- a) Determine continued co-teaching services or change of placement,  
and
  - b) Revise the IEP as appropriate.
- 4) In order to offer co-teaching services, the LEA must complete a plan for implementation which includes continuous professional development and submit the plan to the Vermont Department of Education for approval.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines special education to include specially designed instruction that addresses the unique needs resulting from a child's disability and ensures that the child will be able to access the general curriculum in order to meet educational standards that apply to all students. An IEP team may decide that co-teaching is the best way to provide specially designed instruction for an individual child. This decision would require participation and agreement by all IEP team members and be reflected in the goals and services included in the IEP. The department recommends that instructional services to be provided through co-teaching should reflect "special educator" as provider and "co-teaching" in the group size column on the service page of the IEP.

As with any IEP service, the effectiveness of co-teaching should be reviewed and progress on co-teaching goals reported as required. If progress towards IEP goal addressed through co-teaching is not satisfactory over time, as evident in ongoing assessment data, the IEP team would consider whether changes to the IEP are needed.

Training is required for all educators who will be co-teaching. There is a requirement that the training be approved by the DOE. The form for requesting approval is attached to this memo. This summer the ESAs will be offering co-teaching trainings in Burlington, Montpelier, White River Junction, Lyndonville and the Brattleboro area. The content for these trainings was developed in conjunction with staff from co-teaching pilot schools, instructors who have taught co-teaching courses for Vermont schools, ESA directors, DOE staff and other interested parties. These trainings are one way to meet the training requirement. A training plan could also be developed locally. An approvable plan needs the following elements:

- Delivery of training by qualified individuals
- Addresses at a minimum the content of the ESA course syllabus
- Resources and materials that support learning the content
- Sufficient time to address the content
- Application of learning through job embedded professional development

The change in definition of special education to include co-teaching allows the time that the special educator spends providing instructional services through co-teaching to a group that includes one or more students requiring the service based on their IEPs to be considered an allowable special education cost under Section 2366.2.1(a). This is conditional upon the school district having their co-teaching plan approved by the department for the school year.

## Co Teaching Training Plan

School/Supervisory Union:

Date:

Contact:

Approved/Not Approved:

Date:

Comments:

How will staff receive initial training in co teaching?

*If you are not participating in an established course please complete page 2.*

What on-going support and coaching will be provided to staff involved in co teaching?

How will new or additional staff who co teach in the future be trained?

How will administrative support and time for establishing and maintaining relationships, planning lessons, assessing student learning, etc. be provided?

## **Plan for Co Teaching Self Study**

Who will plan, deliver or facilitate the co teaching training? Describe this person's qualification.

What texts or other resources will be used?

What is the specific schedule for the co teaching training?

Briefly describe how the following will be addressed

- Developing a common vision for co teaching.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Definition and models for co teaching including principles and practices for inclusion.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Selection of co teaching partners, establishing and maintaining the partnerships.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Essentials for co teaching partnerships including communication, collaboration, conflict resolution and self reflection.